

Monday, January 14, 2008

### **Climbing all the more stratospherically after a plastic sax replaces a stolen one.**

Ornette Coleman performing in 2007. Â Music legend Ornette Coleman has always played the music he likes to play, even when that has meant a smaller audience, fewer well-paid gigs, and even the theft of his sax by perturbed audience members.Â Early in hisÂ career, one or more apparently disgruntled audience members stole Coleman's saxophone. In a great example of the lesson of dealing with change from my t'ai chi teacher Len Kennedy -- who urges accepting rather than fighting change -- Coleman got together the money to buy a new sax, which was primarily made of plastic. Instead of gettingÂ upset at the lack of more metal in his sax, ColemanÂ learned, appreciated, and worked with the new sound produced by the plastic parts of his sax.Â Like jazz legend Cecil Taylor (whom I experienced performing at the Library of Congress in 1999, followed by joining several of his friends (I tagged along with our mutual friend Trudy Morse) for amazing talk in his hotel room), ColemanÂ believes in transcending theÂ traditional strictures of musical form, to interact with his fellow musicians and to convey his own musical meaning. He plays in the moment, which is what trial lawyers must do to be the most effective and persuasive. Â Ornette Coleman has been uncompromising in sticking to musical excellence as he sees it. Ultimately, through all his sweat, toil, and financial struggles at sticking to his musical convictions, recognition increasingly caughtÂ up with him over the years, including a Pulitzer prize, and prominent coverage in the December 2007 issue of Rolling StoneÂ that features Led Zeppelin on the cover (which coverage I have incorporated into this blog entry). Â Â Of course, although Coleman -- being an artist -- was able to refuse to please his audiences over the years (other than to give his art his all, as he defined it) and to focus on the music that pleased him, trial lawyers are of no use if they do not do their best to serve their clients and persuade judges and jurors. An overlap between Coleman and me remains that I focus on taking clients whose causes fit in with what is important and stimulating to me, and continue remaining energized by my work through focusing on work that has meaning to me, rather than seeking to have a law practice that fits others' notions of the path a lawyer should take, and their notions of how a lawyer should conform. That is a wonderful part ofÂ being my own boss. Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Persuasion at 00:00